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PERSONALITY FROM THE MONISTIC POINT OF VIEW.

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THE monistic idea, when once it enters the mind, is so great and so pervading that by its light the whole universe is transformed. This mighty frame of objective existence, which in our unspeculative or materialistic realism we have thought of simply as Thing, becomes at once a great Subject of which we form a part, and from which we feel ourselves scarcely separated by the primary distinction of me and not-me. At first our whole thinking seems to be reduced to a state of flux, hopefully or tremblingly awaiting the crystallization of restatement. For does not the monistic thesis mean that God is the one central Reality; that his mind pervades the whole universe from smallest atom to highest product of human genius; that the Infinite is not dualistically set over against, and wearisomely toiling with, a dead load of matter that retards his free movement, nor eternally mocked by the sin of a puny race of created spirits who defy his will; but that somehow all these are but manifold expressions of the nature of one Being who is perpetually creating the world and its history by the eternal movement of his spirit? With such a mighty reconception of the real essence of all being it almost seems as if our whole mental life must for the time being revert anew to a state of query. If all nature and humanity is an expression of God, then how is one form of knowledge or worship, which all comes inevitably to him, higher or lower than another? or how is religion any more vitally a having to do with God than the healthy performance of animal functions, since these are but the creative Will forming and sustaining us? "If every event be wholly due to him, how can we say that any single event, such as a miracle, or any tendency of events, such as 'making for righteousness,' is specially his? What room for difference or distinction is there within the

circuit of his universal power?"¹ What shall we do with those salutary conceptions of the universe which depended on our thought of the Artificer as outside of its plastic substance, or with those ideas of sin and redemption, historically so practical as working principles, which can rise only from the hypothesis of a dualistically judging Mind and forgiving Will? These and similar questions are constantly coursing through our thoughts as the immanence of God becomes magnified to greater proportions in our contemplation of the universe.

A natural dread which obtrudes itself upon the mind of the one who finds himself carried into the current of monistic thought is the dread of pantheism. This dread arises from the perception of those dangers lurking in pantheistic systems which threaten our conception of personality. Monism insists that its infinite Energy of which all things are but the expression is a person, or at least includes in itself all essential personal powers. Whether consciousness, which marks that stage of the cosmical process attained in psychical life, is the summit and crown of personality, or only the attribute of an intermediate and finite grade, like light which is caused by ether waves only while vibrating at a certain intermediate rate, may be a further question. The first fact, at least, with which monism must reckon is the fact of personality in God and man. How it defines and interprets personality is the prime consideration in any estimation of its adequacy as a theory attempting to account for the phenomena of the universe. The conception of personality, as the one most likely to be obscured by the monistic view, is the conception that most urgently calls for readjustment and definition. At the same time it must be borne in mind that, in the attempt at such readjustment within the limits of a paper like the present, it is possible only to indicate a few of the landing places for thought, and so not improbably to start a great many more questions than there is the opportunity to settle. It is hoped that the writer's aim will be accepted as one of outlining and suggestion, rather than of the impregnable and final establishing, at this stage, of his views.

¹ BALFOUR, *Foundations of Belief*.

I.

First of all, let us consider what possible personality we can predicate of God; and especially whether that personality is like the psychical life which we find in man, or higher than it, and yet including it, as the infinite includes the finite.

We form our conception of personality from what we find in humanity. This is the highest personality that we comprehend, and in predicating personality of God we reason up from our own natures to his. For this we find a theological sanction in the ancient formula that God created man in his own image, and after his likeness; from which we infer that all that is in the original or substance we may find in the image or shadow. The soundness of this method of reasoning remains to be considered. We find this personality to be composed of self-consciousness and self-determination. Of these two elements the psychical life seems to be built upon self-consciousness as the central one. By its consciousness that life is unified; the sensations of the organism and the thoughts of the mind coalesce into a soul only as consciousness arises and proclaims all these operations to be the manifestations of one being. Even our self-determination or volition we know to be will, rather than reflex organic function, only as we are conscious of a purpose preceding and determining it. Thus the very center and unity of our psychic life is self-consciousness.

But even in ourselves we apprehend and feel impelled to something higher than the mere psychical life. Our conscience and our religious intuition recognize a distinction between soul and spirit, even though our understanding may not separate them one from the other. While the soul accepts the responsibility that comes of being distinctly spiritual in its nature, spirit is nevertheless something transcending soul—something of higher reach or larger aspect, if not a separate entity in a tripartite being. Is spirit simply that side of the soul which faces toward, and receives influences from, above, as the body with its senses is the side or organ of the soul which communicates with the world? Such a definition may seem satisfactory when we are looking only at the spiritual side of our own nature,

but it is hardly a definition that will cover all spirit, the infinite with the finite.

When we study our will more deeply we find that it is more than the mere faculty of conscious volitions, and that there is a movement of our being over all which is freer, more expressive of our character, than the temporary choices into which we may be beguiled by our feelings or misled by an imperfect understanding, which, as an indication of our real self, is to the chance volitions of the moment as the main current of a river is to the ripples and eddies along its banks. This higher movement of our being we call our spirit. In speaking of spirit as a phase of the personal manifestation we do not often separate the thought of it from that of psychic life as its center and substance. But as a social² force or a certain emanation from the general condition of a period, spirit is often spoken of in popular language in a sense whose connotation of personality is doubtful. We speak of the spirit of an age, the spirit of a community, the spirit or animus of a movement, the spirit of this world, or the *Zeitgeist*; and of such forms of specific influence we often hear used the expression "impersonal spirit," because these forces are diffused and we find no center for their self-consciousness. But is not impersonal spirit a contradiction in terms? Is spirit below personality because it has an exactly representative center in no one finite soul? Such diffused spirit is really above personality, in that it sways personality and carries it along with it; it really commands and characterizes the age in which it appears. "Among the energies of the world it appears weak, but it is in reality supreme. Slowly but surely everything gives way before it. What is it? All we know is that it is the radiated spiritual life."³ It seems to us weak only when in thought we try to separate it from its forms of manifestation, and view it in its rarified inner essence. When we remember that spirit does not fly around in the air, but that it is immanent and organic in humanity, we are in a better position to recognize its strength. But here at least we come to something in personality which we cannot formulate

² See DR. COYLE, *The Spirit in Literature and Life*, Boston, 1896.

³ JOHN H. DENISON, *Christ's Idea of the Supernatural*, Boston, 1895.

in terms of soul ; and it all shows that there is something beyond psychical life which we must take into the account as we reason from ourselves up to God.

It is interesting to observe the Scripture differentiation of psychic and pneumatic, or soul and spirit life, though we can take the time for no exhaustive examination of passages. Without pressing to a rigid trichotomic interpretation such passages as that in Thessalonians where Paul prays that God may keep his readers' spirit and soul and body, but conceding that this may be a rhetorical pleonasm for the whole man, and no attempt at exactness of terminology, we may nevertheless everywhere see that Paul recognizes some distinction between psyche and pneuma, and between psychic and pneumatic life. His order of spiritual development is, first that which is psychic, then that which is pneumatic. The summing up of functions and ends for the psyche is that it is ζῶσα, or living—the first Adam was made a living soul—while the spirit is characteristically ζωοποιῶν, or life-giving—the last man was made a life-giving spirit. There is a radical contrast between the psychical, or soul-man, and the pneumatic, or spirit-man. The psychical man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and he is not able to know them because they are pneumatically or spiritually discerned ; but he that is pneumatic discerneth all things, and he himself is discerned by no one. Paul even speaks of a psychical or soul-body as the one in which our humanity is sown, and of a pneumatic or spirit-body as the one in which it is raised and inherits eternal life ; while nevertheless, as to the separation of psyche and pneuma, the writer to the Hebrews implies that there is so intimate a blending that the living Word of God exemplifies most strikingly its power in being able to effect that separation.

To summarize the passages in which the term spirit is introduced antithetically, we may say that spirit is spoken of in the Bible in contrast with various entities ; but it is always as the freer and more spontaneous term of the comparison—indicating that which is less rigidly bound by form or by necessity. In legal and scriptural interpretation it is contrasted with γράμμα,

or *the letter*, where the very point of the comparison is that the letter is fixed, confining, and narrowing, unadaptable to the various exigencies to which moral law must be applied. In ethical theory, especially in John's terminology, spirit is contrasted with *σάρξ*, or *flesh*, where the latter is the egoistic, or individualized, often, though not always, sinfully selfish principle. In one instance (1 Cor. 14:15) it is even placed over against the *νοῦς*, or *mind*, where the latter is evidently that faculty or inward operation which labors more for intelligibility and effect, or is perhaps more subject to modifications by human science and convention—in either case is more bound by circumstances or demands. As contrasted with the *σῶμα*, or *body*, spirit refers to all the higher part of man which is above the natural law of growth and death, and the term is often thus used synonymously with *soul*. Spirit being thus common with soul in constituting the freer part of man, we should expect that when this essentially free entity goes farther, and even splits itself off or contrasts itself with the *ψυχὴ*, or soul, it should still be the freer term of the comparison, and should point to a determination or limitation in our psychic personality to which spirit is not subject.

And, indeed, when we come to form for ourselves a conception of the nature of spirit in its distinction from everything else—even soul, which in some connections of thought is identified with it—we shall hold our thought to this one fact of freedom as the center of the distinction. We seek a clear conception of a thing by comparison or contrast with something else; but when we place pure spirit in antithesis with anything that may be compared with it, we only discover this in each case, that spirit is freer. Its freedom differentiates it. In fact, spirit is essentially freedom. "It is a result of speculative philosophy," says Hegel, "that freedom is the sole truth of spirit." And by freedom we mean self-movement, or activity. Spirit is active, not passive; it cannot be acted upon. Whatever there is in our personality which is capable of entering into passive relations belongs to our psychic, as distinguished from our pneumatic, life. Spirit in its purity we cannot bring into passive relations even

to the extent of making it the object of knowledge. No one knows spirit ontologically ; we put ourselves into relation with pure spirit only dynamically, that is, by experiencing its power or being swept along by its movement. "For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God." Spirit-knowledge is subjective ; and a spirit only knows its like by those sympathetic vibrations, as it were, like those of consonant strings, by which the like spirits share in a common movement, and each in its act of knowledge knows itself. Pure spirit never places itself over against us as a not-me, no matter to what degree we may be possessed by it. The believer is never so unified, and never so truly and strongly himself, as when he is most filled with the Spirit of God. We know that spirit subjectively, namely, as the highest will and deepest tendency of ourselves, never separating it from our own consciousness, and indeed never bringing it before consciousness for contemplation at all. So in mentioning the disciples' relation to spirit above themselves, Jesus does not speak of apprehending a spirit, or of getting acquainted with a spirit ; but he uses the remarkable form, to be *of* a spirit, that is, to share its movement ; and he tells the disciples on one occasion that in their superficial eagerness they do not know what manner of spirit they are of — their spirit is not mirrored in their consciousness.

In our human personality we found the two elements to be self-consciousness and self-determination. We found the first of these to be the center of the soul or psychic life. The soul is unified by its consciousness, and it is this which separates all existence as non-ego from its own self or ego. But as to the *pneuma* or spirit, may we not say that its center is the self-determination or will ? It is will which unifies the spirit of man. Spirit is defined only in terms of will, and not in terms of consciousness, or ontologically. Even the spirit of a man is never studied as an object, but only subjectively, that is, by being *of* it ; or else dynamically, that is, by feeling its embodied effects. We never know a spirit outside of us by what it *is*, but only by what it *does*. For us it exists simply as movement or

tendency, and nothing else. We know a man's spirit by kinship, sympathy, like tendency, if we are of a like spirit ; if we are not, we can only apprehend it by its utterances, which may or may not be a perfect expression of that spirit, and through which, therefore, we may often do injustice to it by our criticism. The pneumatic or spiritual life of man has as a center of unity, and that center not a point, but a direction or motion, his will or inner movement.

The higher side of our personality, therefore, seems to be that which is centered in our will, or freest and most characteristic tendency, rather than in our consciousness. In most general terms it is our *direction*. It is all one thing or all another. It is not, like the soul, a congeries of conflicting wishes and propensities over which angels watch in solicitude to see which shall have the ascendancy. Nor does the higher spirit, like soul, present a lower nature and then a better nature which may stand as a *pou sto* from which higher influences may operate to save the rest. God does not transform a spirit. He simply replaces it by another spirit. The evil spirits are, therefore, never represented as redeemable ; and in Christ's argument it is treated as incredible that the prince of demons should have a complex nature enabling him for any purpose to do the work of God. The higher side of our personality is the central will, the deepest and dominant force of our being, which cannot act in two directions at the same time, and which, if evil, can minister to our redemption only by being replaced by an opposite spirit, which operation is scripturally called our being born anew of the Spirit of God.

Now, in finding such higher personality as we can predicate of God, we are led to think of this higher than psychical life as in the direction of, and throwing light upon, the divine. In other words, the divine personality is not a magnified psychical life—for the psychical cannot apprehend the things of God—but an infinite spiritual life. When, therefore, our Lord says, "God is Spirit," he is saying something more than simply that God is a person. Why should he take the trouble to tell the woman of Samaria a truth which her worship presupposed and fought for no

less vitally than his own? He was evidently trying to impress on her that God is freer than mere psychic personality, and therefore not confined to places, nor to be apprehended as one soul apprehends another soul. Jesus goes on to say, "They that worship Him must worship in pneuma, or spirit, and truth"—that is to say, not as soul, unified by our consciousness and guided by knowledge that comes to our perceptions, but as spirit, brought into *rapprochement* with the divine by our inner movement or will, do we worship the infinite Spirit. All this makes us think of God as a mighty Movement, to be known dynamically rather than ontologically, a Being whose sole essence, for our apprehension, is Freedom. Need we be so greatly shocked by reading Matthew Arnold's translation of this passage: "God is an Influence; and they who worship Him must worship of inner movement and in sincerity"? This is only making the passage say—though it strikes us suddenly and baldly, like an unprepared chord in music—that the divine, so far as its substance is concerned, can only be conceived of as a mighty Movement, or Pressure, or Tendency, differentiated from all lower forms of being in that it is absolutely free and self-moved, the Primal Will of the universe; and that He is worshiped by means of harmonious motion in us, rather than by such knowledge and predilection as form the basis of personal affection between soul and soul.

Such a rarifying of our conception of personality to that of pure tendency is not a de-personifying of God. It is only viewing personality in its higher aspect, namely as creative. God is essentially a Creator—such is the whole character of the divine movement. Creation is the objectifying of will. Whatever by any possibility becomes an object, or capable of entering into passive relations, is so far created thing, not creative energy—it is will arrived at its goal or objectified. To resolve personality into freedom, or self-originating movement, is simply to think our way in the reverse order back up the stream of the creative process, from the created or objective person up to the Person who is uncreate. It is not to de-personify God, but only to de-objectify him or consider him as Creator.

But the question arises: Can there in the possible circle of our knowledge be such an entity as is indicated—a movement that is not any objective thing moving, a somewhat so free and active that it cannot enter into passive relations even to the extent of being an object of knowledge, no objective thing at all, but only a sweep of tendency—well, let us fall back on Scripture and say, a puff, a breathing or panting, a *πνεῦμα*? Is not your God who is purely a Motion inconceivable? Herbert Spencer was honest enough to call him the Unknowable; and we are aware that the bulk of the answers to him were but the outcry of outraged, unspeculative dogmatism which had not taken the trouble to examine the content of his concept, but wreaked itself, as does all external criticism upon pure spirit that is alien to it, on the logical implications and contradictions of a term. Inconceivable as thing, yes, but not as power. In our physical science we have a similar conception which we use every day. It is the conception of force, an entity which as thing or mere object is just as inconceivable as pure spirit. We know force only by its effects. We measure it by placing in its train some specially contrived object which is affected by its motion. Force, like what I have already affirmed spirit to be, is in our minds purely a dynamical conception; and we cannot therefore conceive of it as consisting of any substance which can enter into passive relations at all. It is purely active in any conception which we can form of its nature.

I have said that we know force only in its effects. This is, indeed, true of force so long as it remains below the level of our personality. But suppose that in its essential nature it is higher than our personality. Then, in that manifestation of it which comes to the level of our personality or will, we begin to know it in another way, the way in which I have said we know pure spirit, namely by moving along with it, becoming an organism for its working, being *of* it. This is a subjective knowledge, that is, a knowledge of a movement which has become our own inner state rather than a contemplated object—and this knowledge, Schopenhauer says, is our only possible apprehension of the thing-in-itself. But why do we need to say that this higher

movement which we apprehend subjectively, in our personality and in our worship, is any different in its nature from the force which, in the world of necessity below us, we can study only in its effects? Why should we not say that all force is but the all-pervading will of God, and that the difference between the sanctifying spirit within us and the moving principle of the cosmos below us is but a difference of manifestation? Indeed, does not our deeper thinking seem destined to drive us to this conclusion? Since the discovery of the principle of the correlation of forces we have been led to suspect that all force may be ultimately resolvable into one. But as we attempt to think our way back, from derived force to that which causes it, until we come to the primal uncaused and absolutely free Energy, we can stop at nothing short of Will. Self-originated energy is will; and self-originated energy is but coming to its differentiated manifestation in all that infinite manifold of ceaseless forces with which the universe is filled. All nature comes in direct contact with the omnipresent God and is moved, or rather, we may say, constituted, by him; we as more highly organized beings come to him as our Father. Therefore, in knowing God by his external effects we shall still confine ourselves to our scale-pans, and our thermometers, and our electrometers, which are but registers of his impact as force; while in knowing him subjectively we worship him "of inner movement and in sincerity."

Let us think of God, then, as the primal Force or Will of the universe, the ultimate Energy into which all force is resolvable. I will not say the soul of the universe, standing in a relation to the cosmos like that of our soul to our body, for the end and goal of a soul's existence is to acquire and subserve an individual life—the first Adam was made a *living* soul; but I will say, the life-giving, or, what is the same thing, creative Spirit of the universe, whose breathing or essential movement is not to live, but to make to exist. Soul animates its body: the eternal Spirit constitutes or creates its cosmos. It does not simply live in its body, like a soul, borrowing the body's organs to subserve its own existence; rather, the eternal Spirit's existence is complete, and its wealth of organific life overflows in the ceaseless

process of expressing itself through the ever-developing manifold of the universe.

Thus thinking of God, we find no longer any place or need for the jejune deistical question whether there is a God. There *must* be some origin from which it all starts, some prime impulse which resides at the very seat of all power—in other words, some First Cause. That Beginning of all things we will call God; and that his power moves in us and in all phenomena becomes so obvious as to admit of no argument. If the old deistical question assumes another shape, and expresses itself as Huxley propounded it, “Whether there is anything psychical in the universe higher than ourselves,” then, indeed, we may find some occasion for debate; but I humbly submit that the conclusion of our reasoning need not disturb us, whichever way it may establish itself. Though there be nothing psychical in the universe higher than ourselves; there is something spiritual—something far higher than psyche or soul, and including in itself all its distinctive powers. Indeed, we may say with Spencer that “the Ultimate Power is no more representable in terms of human consciousness than human consciousness is representable in terms of a plant’s functions.” We have found that which is highest in ourselves to be something more than psychic life; why, then, should we weary ourselves with striving to maintain that the infinite Creative Power is a soul? Perhaps we have shrunk from using Matthew Arnold’s form of words, thrown out as his concept of God, which designate him as the “Stream of tendency by which all things fulfil the law of their being.” Impelled by a natural prejudice, we have repudiated Spencer’s agnosticism on general principles, although he says: “But amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty that the inquiring soul is ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed.” But have we not failed to profit by the utterances of these men because we have neglected to consider what an immense deal they have said when they have said thus much; and would not our more profitable course be to see how much of content we shall find in that conception of spirit which

is purely dynamical, if we run out all the relations of the infinite Cosmic Movement to those facts of personality and spiritual aspiration with which we concern ourselves in our study of religion and the incarnate Son of God?

II.

We come now to consider that form of personality which we call psychic personality or soul. This is personality as found in ourselves. In common with all personality it consists of self-consciousness and self-determination. But the constitutive factor, that by which personality comes to be known, is the self-consciousness. Round this the powers of the soul group themselves, or englobe themselves into a possibility of manifestation, so that the soul becomes a thing that can be known, while, on the other hand, pure spirit cannot be known as thing at all, but only dynamically. And yet, with all our contrasting of soul and spirit, we cannot regard them as separate parts of a tripartite being. Man consists of body, soul, and spirit, but soul is nevertheless essentially spirit, only spirit acting in a certain way. It is spirit working to constitute something. If we think of spirit as essentially movement, then we may think of soul as movement seeking a center. It is a vortex of spirit. Thus forming a vortex of ever-moving activity, it becomes cognizable as a thing, and we call it soul. But while as thing it is soul, as force it is spirit. Schopenhauer has pointed out that even in self-consciousness it is will that holds the primacy.

We can thus see how it is that God may be the universal spirit, not dualistically set over against us through a hard-and-fast oppositeness of essence, but capable of constituting us by the goings forth of his creative energy; and yet how at the same time the assertion that God is all does not imply a swallowing up of our personality in the sea of infinite Being, as the pantheists are charged with imagining. There is the infinite creative Spirit ever expressing himself in us, and yet that constant activity is engaged in forming vortices of spirit, which constitute little quasi-independent centers of activity knowing themselves and known as persons or souls.

This new vertical determination of the creative spirit constitutes an entity that is capable of entering into passive relations. It can be acted upon. It can be known as a concrete object or ontologically. In its act of knowing, too, knowledge may impinge upon it *ab extra*, or through sensation. All such knowledge puts the soul into a passive attitude, which is impossible in pure spirit. The saying, *Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*, may apply to finite intelligence, but not to the infinite Spirit. With the infinite Spirit there is no knowledge *in sensu*, for the infinite Spirit constitutes no vortex of individuality on which impression can act. The knowledge of the infinite Spirit or the absolute Activity is knowledge from the inside, or subjective knowledge. It is the knowledge of active, creative intelligence, a knowledge like that which we have of the states of our own will, not when reflecting, but when acting. To the infinite Intelligence, therefore, as we conceive of him monistically, the whole universe is known simply as the working of his own creative processes. "God, the absolute reason," says W. T. Harris, "is perfect knowing and willing in one—what he knows he creates; for his knowing causes to be that which he intellectually perceives."⁴ The soul, on the other hand, is distinguished from the absolutely free and active Spirit in being capable of being impinged upon by knowledge which comes as sensation or impression. All its objects of knowledge, indeed, outside of its purely spiritual operations, are distinguished from itself as not-me. The soul is that particular activity of spirit which concerns itself with constituting an individuality on which influence may act.

This action of creative energy resulting in a vortex of spirit is what constitutes the soul a created object. Our psychic nature is created, but it is created, be it observed, not by being shaped by an external Workman out of material wholly alien to his nature, but by being a particular mode of his ever-flowing activity. We have erred in making the Creator and the created wholly opposite in essence. We have thus found it difficult, perhaps even sacrilegious, to conceive of ourselves as of identical

⁴ *The Spiritual Sense of Dante's Divina Commedia*, New York.

nature with God. But in common with the whole universe of created things, we *are* the divine Spirit constantly acting in a certain way. He is ceaselessly creating us by flowing in a vortex which by this constitutive action acquires individuality and plasticity, and which turns about and formally thinks of its very Creator as a not-me excluded from itself.

When this creative energy is wholly immanent, that is, wholly taken up, as it were, in the process of constituting itself a concrete object, then we have the merely animal soul, or the functional intelligence. Such a soul exists in the brute, and, as wholly exhausted in frankly *being itself*, is sinless and irresponsible. That side of our human nature is the merely psychical man which knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God. But in us the creative energy is also transcendent, just as God is not only immanent, but also transcendent in the universe. It rises above itself. It looks back upon itself and judges itself for its acquired character and deeds. It thus becomes conscious of sin and shortcoming. Such a transcendent and judging element in our personality is our distinctively spiritual nature. It is the residue of spirit over and above that vortical activity which is absorbed in constituting soul. It is the spiritual man; and it exists in every accountable human being, whether regenerate or not, in the form of conscience.

Observe, however, that while this residue of divinely creative spirit which acts as conscience and the spiritual man is distinctively will, it is nevertheless not simply a synonym for the volitional activity of the soul. It is rather a divine activity *within* the soul. The soul, ever being constituted by that vortical determination of the creative Spirit, exists as a quasi-independent activity, and has not only its capacity for passive relations and its knowledge of itself as an individual, but its finite habit of volition or will. This is not the original activity of the creative Spirit, but a derived action; it is the created soul, in its turn, exercising the functions of a free being like a little image of its Creator. It differs from the freer creative Spirit in being the faculty of conscious choices. And its wishes center in the ascendancy or pleasure of the finite self or soul. It is

the soul acting, just as we have also the soul knowing and known. It reflects the wishes, not only of the individual, but of the species, so that we see its freedom modified by merely animal determinations and by heredity. It is of precisely this activity of our nature that the doubt is possible whether we are free or not. We seem to make our choices freely, and yet we have that invariable determination to evil which furnishes a ground for the theory that we are fallen beings; and the collective choices of men, according to their class and environment, may be predicted and built upon with a considerable degree of certainty. The soul is but an imperfect image of its infinitely free Creator, and the more imperfect as it is more exclusively guided by its psychic volition. When it is simply soul, acting in its purely self-centered personality, it is only a created thing: the creative Force which constitutes it has centered into a concrete entity like the material atom. Its fancied freedom is but a finite and derived freedom. The real dividing line between the world of necessity and the world of freedom is not at conscious personality, but a little higher. It is at the spiritual, as distinguished from the psychical, nature of man. Here we see the universal Spirit, not concentered to a soul, as in the material world we see it concentered to an atom, but free and transcendent, judging its psychic self and seeking the universal Good as an end—in short, creative or life-giving Spirit.

This idea of vortices is not one that has its place only in picturing to ourselves the nature of the soul. We have the same idea in the science of the material world, assisting us to form a notion of the atom. In common with all ultimate conceptions, the nature of matter is one of the irreducible enigmas of philosophy. Precisely what is matter? We have got as far as to conceive of it as composed of infinitely small specks in motion. To use Balfour's summary statement:

According to [the view of the best science] the world consists essentially of innumerable small particles of definite and unchanging mass, endowed with a variety of mechanical, chemical, and other qualities, and forming by their mutual association the various bodies which we can handle and see, and many others which we can neither handle nor see. These ponderable

particles have their being in a diffused and all-penetrating medium, or ether, of which we know little, except that it possesses, or behaves as if it possessed, certain mechanical properties of a very remarkable character; while the whole of this material system, ponderable particles and ether alike, is animated (if the phrase may be permitted me) by a quantity of energy which, though it varies in the manner and place of its manifestation, yet never varies in total amount.

To this limit, then, science comes in its working concept — it finds the world composed of particles animated by energy. But the thinking mind cannot rest in this conception; indeed, as a theory it does not account for the facts.⁵ If matter is ultimately distinct from the energy which moves it — something inert and passive — then we have an irreconcilable dualism, and the universal Spirit cannot be infinite. It is forever confronted by a passive load or burden which it must move. Such a cosmology may well exercise itself with the doubt whether matter is eternal, and whether the visible universe is a piece of carpentry shaped out of preëxisting materials. But this idea of the material particle is not an ultimate conception. The question still remains, Just what is this particle of matter endowed with such wondrous properties? It will be noted that the “mechanical, chemical, and other qualities” with which science finds the atoms endowed are but manifestations of energy. And such we may call the particle itself. “Matter is nothing,” says Ostwald, “but a spatially contiguous group of different energies.” The atom is, in other words, a vortex of energy; and that vortical action of force constitutes a local point where the movement, being no longer outward, appears endowed with passive qualities. A point at which force acts to a center becomes manifest as matter. Thus we have no longer the irreducible dualism of inert matter and animating energy: it is all energy; and that inertia or passivity which in the atom seems so opposite to the free energy of will or spirit is but a difference of manifestation. Instead of using the term which Balfour introduced with hesitancy, and saying that these particles are “animated” by a fixed quantity of energy, let us say they are constituted, or created,

⁵ See article in *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. XLVIII, pp. 589–601 (March, 1896), by WILHELM OSTWALD, on “The Failure of Scientific Materialism.”

by a ceaselessly moving energy which is not to be thought of as like the living soul animating a physical body of diverse nature, but like the life-giving or creative Spirit whose movement is the constituting substance of all that exists.

Precisely similar, from a monistic point of view, is the nature of that personal unity which we call the soul. That is a vortex of spirit which by its activity to a center is made capable of passive relations and can thus be known ontologically, can know as a result of the impact of sensation, and can will as a finite unity or selfhood by conscious volition. It is the spiritual atom, constituted by the same creative Energy and by the same kind of processes as the material atom, only on some higher stage, so that consciousness gives us a glimpse here and there of its activity and its intention.

*"So schaff' ich am sausenenden Webstuhl der Zeit,
Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid."*

III.

With regard to the third division of my subject, namely, the redemption of the human personality, I can only indicate very briefly the main direction in which thought may labor to give an account of the facts and problems from a monistic standpoint. Our cosmological thinking has brought us to this point: we have found that the highest form of spiritual life is not psychic personality or the individual soul, but a determination of spiritual force which is absolutely active, not seeking a center or individualized, but outward-flowing, altruistic, creative, or self-expressive, or, what is the same thing when related to free beings, self-imparting movement or love. The lower or human personality is unified by self-consciousness, and thus becomes an individual; and yet genetically it is an atom or vortex of spirit, that is to say, nothing else than the same creative movement working about a center. Endowed with self-consciousness, this psychic being knows that he is not the final or highest form of life. A being whose life-forces, or spiritual tendencies, all labor to constitute himself an objective, finished product is a selfish

being; and that selfish or individual determination the self-conscious unit feels to be sin or a missing of his true end. We are, therefore, confronted with a problem of redemption, that is, the producing in humanity of something more than a created product.

Here, then, we find a restlessness in one species of God's creatures which can be appeased only by a progress or transition to a higher form of life. How it comes that "the Divine Being Who is the Ground and Source of everything that is, Who sustains all, directs all, produces all," can have preferred forms of life concentered from his universally pervading activity, or one part of his universe which is nearer to him than another, is a question which reaches into the inner nature of the Infinite himself. That he does is a presupposition, however, not alone in our conviction of the need of redemption, but in all evolutionary thought. "Can we, then," says Balfour, "think of evolution in a God-created world without attributing to its Author the notion of purpose slowly worked out; the striving towards something which is not, but which gradually becomes, and in the fullness of time will be? Surely not. But, if not, can it be denied that evolution—the evolution, I mean, which takes place in time, the natural evolution of science, as distinguished from the dialectical evolution of metaphysics—does involve something of the nature of that 'preferential action' which is so difficult to understand, yet so impossible to abandon?"

In redemption the movement is in the nature of a return of the created life to its Source. And yet, though the sin of the psychic personality consists in an exaggeration or idolizing of that movement which produces individuality, its salvation or final blessedness is not to be in the losing of individuality, or reabsorption into the sea of infinite being. That is a pantheistic view which thinks of the Absolute as the universal Ocean of existence whose surface ceaselessly gleams out in human consciousness into sparkles of personality, ever twinkling into evanescent light and sinking back into eternal calm, like the reflection of the sunlight on the waves. But to create a luminous finite intellect in order simply to dissolve it and reabsorb it

into undifferentiated existence would be only aimlessly to fashion in order to destroy. That individuality once constituted is to remain an individuality through all the stages of its higher or ethical evolution. Individuality is not redeemed by vanishing, but by broadening itself, diffusing itself, throwing the force of its unified energy into an outward-flowing movement which is creative like that of the universal Spirit, filial or toward its Source, altruistic or self-diffusing. The moral death of the soul is in stopping at being vortically constituted, as if that were a completion; its redemption is in using that individual life which is constituted by the vortical creative process as a beginning or a genetic element in a new creative movement on a larger stage engaged in producing something higher. Whatever in this world is completed is dead. The only continued life possible is that which consists in using the completed thing as a reproductive element in the formation of a higher product. The soul is completed in becoming an individual. Its redemption or blessedness consists, not in losing that individuality, but in augmenting and bringing to fruition its freedom in the production of an altruistic and spiritual existence which shall work up the conscious purpose and striving into the collective unit called society, and into the redeemed unity in Christ, the Word made flesh.

We here catch a glimpse of our place in a mighty creative movement constituting the world and its history, which ever repeats itself in wider circles and with higher units of force. We have identified all force with the will of God. That force seems to be acting in vortices. In creating matter it plays around the minute vortex which constitutes the atom. But these atoms do not stop at being created. Neither do they lose their individual atomicity in becoming genetic elements in the production of the next higher unit, the chemical body. There are in the maze of chemical activities plenty of breakings-up and recombinations, but the atom always remains an atom, and is not reabsorbed into undifferentiated, unvortexed force. The next higher species of vortical activity is in organic life, and the new unit which is produced is the cell. Here the working is on

a scale which admits of its being studied with the microscope. Microscopical research shows us that in every living organism there are countless minute cells which constitute its substance. Every cell is composed of three kinds of matter, not to be distinguished in any way except by how they act; and every particle of the substance of the cell passes successively through these three states. There is first what is called nutrient matter, that is, matter that the cell feeds upon, so to speak, or builds itself up out of. And then there is living matter, which, as it were, attacks the nutrient matter and converts it into the third kind, formed matter. In every cell of every living organism, whether vegetable or animal, there is constantly going on that process of converting nutrient matter into formed matter, such as makes up the substance of the living tissue; and this is all that the microscope discloses of the nature of life. But notice this, that we do not see the living germ in the cell convert dead food matter into living substance, but rather into finished or formed matter. The remarkable thing is that when the formed matter of the cell is once finished it is ready to be thrown off. It is practically dead, and once dead and finished it can never be resuscitated in that organism. It is only while it is living matter, actually going through the mysterious process of being made alive, that it is alive at all. The whole substance of each of us is constantly being changed from nutrient matter into formed and virtually dead matter, with which the body has thenceforth nothing to do except to get rid of it; and this active process of dying inch by inch is what constitutes our life. "Four-fifths of the bulk of most organisms, animal and vegetable, is made up of formed matter. Only one-fifth is really alive."

I have entered at some length into the description of this lowest form of creative activity, whose movement may be followed by the eye, because it presents some striking analogies with that vortical action which I have conceived to be concerned in forming the self-conscious soul. The cell whose formation we have seen does not cease to be an individual cell in its higher work of constituting an element in an organism.

But what might be called its selfish or constitutive life is completed in the process of becoming formed matter. In the same way the soul which simply labors to constitute itself, or to give objective existence to its centripetal wishes, is producing something which is virtually dead as soon as it is finished. This is why the selfish life is spiritual death. The only redemption for the soul is to become, in its whole completed unity, a living or genetic element in the production of higher social and spiritual units. Its outward-flowing or altruistic energies manifest themselves as motives and affections, warm desires and adoring prayers, intellectual, æsthetical, and ethical longings attracted to the true, the beautiful, and the good. These use the soul's whole individuality, and do not break up, but only augment its force and will-power in employing it as a higher unit of energy in the production of institutions, nationalities, civilizations, the general Assembly and Church of the First-born. But all these higher phases of the creative process are but the ceaseless production of formed matter in one or another form of social or spiritual tissue, which becomes dead and outworn as soon as it is rested in as a final thing. Our institutions, civilizations, creeds, "little systems" which "have their day," enslave us and corrupt themselves as soon as they are treated as finalities. It is only while they are creative that they are alive. As created things, the prey of criticism and idolatry, they are dead. As parts of this great and manifold process we ourselves die as mere creatures; our redemption consists in being made creative, or altruistically active and self-expressive, like the universal Spirit. As the Absolute is essentially a Creator, so we find our eternal life only as we become creators, or active sharers in the eternal cosmical movement.

Always preserving, then, and augmenting its personality, the redemptive movement of humanity is toward its Source. If that Source is thought of as the Brahmins and Buddhists think of it, namely, as a stationary center of being, an eternal repose, then the final consummation of the blessed humanity is Nirvana, or eternally will-less peace. If the Ground of all being is will or movement, as we have figured it, then we have still to avoid the

thought of that Movement as irrational, unsatisfied, restlessly seeking for objectification or life. This is Schopenhauer's thought, and it lands him in a pessimistic view of humanity which makes the thought of the Buddhistic Nirvana a relief and a refuge. But we think of it rather as an eternal Movement outward, instead of an infinite craving for satisfaction—an eternally altruistic movement which in the lower realm is creation or self-expression, but to the awakening sympathy of like spirit becomes manifest as love. "God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." These two utterances, which express substantially the same truth, are the most fundamental religious propositions in all the world. The higher movement of the Eternal Energy, which has as its design the redemption of the human, is simply the calling out of the spiritual powers of the man into a voluntary, altruistic, filial response to the infinite Life which is Love.

The first dawn of this response in the soul is the sense of sin. It has sometimes been regarded as an insurmountable barrier to the acceptance of a monistic theory that it does not account for the manifest fact of human sinfulness. That the infinite One is the ground of all existence, even the soul's life and activity, seems to be an assertion that God is the author of sin, and therefore a denial of human responsibility. Some would impart an "ethical" complexion to monism by a reasoning which virtually introduces the old dualistic philosophy under cover of a confusion of thought. I have attempted to account for that detached activity of the human personality which makes sin possible by the hypothesis of a vortical determination of the creative Spirit resulting in individual character. So far from its being impossible to account for the fallen state of humanity on the supposition that God is the central ground of the soul itself, that very supposition, on the contrary, seems to me necessary in order to make intelligible the elevation of man, as the creature of evolution, into a responsible and therefore guilty being.

Our theology characterizes the sinful state of humanity as the result of a fall. Such language implies that the primitive

condition of the human race was spiritually higher than the moral condition which was the result. Its redemption, therefore, must consist in the arrest and reversal of the process which has been universally established in natural humanity. All attainable evidence of natural science, however, has so uniformly pointed to upward progress, rather than degeneration, as the observed direction of human development, that evolution pictures our race as having sprung from the lowest beginnings, and as inheriting traits that even ally us to the inferior animals. Our original sin, or fallen condition, therefore, consists in an inherent obligation to rise, that we may realize a better self. Evolutionary philosophy figures sin as a survival of the animal propensities which have come to be out of keeping with the higher development to which we have attained, and lays it down as our redemptive task to throw off the brute inheritance.

But why there should exist an obligation to throw off anything which has come to us by nature it is difficult to see. If the only task of the man is to become something higher than he is, how is any law of his nature transgressed in his failure to reach that higher ground? If the new state is not his own, but some higher state, which, as it were, lies next to him as a neighbor, then its laws simply impose upon him an alien obligation. But such imposing of law from a purely external source is nothing else than tyranny. The laws whose transgression is sin for me must be laws of my own being. I am only braving an alien power when I do not conform to some preferred fashion of conduct, not defiling the image in which I was created. That there may be an obligation for me, therefore, to throw off the brute inheritance, any more than for the brutes themselves, my real nature must be something higher than that of the brute. And if there is no upper limit at which mankind is to cease throwing off its imperfect past, but on the contrary its only assignable goal is perfect holiness and love, then mankind's essential ground and creative center is the infinite Spirit. Man is fallen because in creative intention he is divine. His inner, most essential nature has been sinned against and defiled when he has conceded the primacy to that nature which he has inherited from the brute.

This can only mean that he is not only a creature of God, as is all existence which is concreated after its kind by the eternal self-objectifying activity, but, in the language of Scripture, he is made in the image of God. His actual beginning in the world of space and time may be very low indeed, and all his observable progress may be an evolution upward from the brute, but his real nature according to the creative intention is akin to the divine; and his present animality and selfishness is a fall from that high ideal estate to which his conscience will ever testify by its sense of sin until he reaches the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

Conscience with its sense of imperfection is, therefore, the first characteristic movement of the spirit in man as it transcends that self-constitutive determination resulting in psychic personality. Transcendent spirit, whether in the soul or in the cosmos, is judging spirit. The transcendent God is the Judge rather than the immanent Creator; the world of redemption is the realm of him who at the end of his creative work looks back upon it and pronounces it very good. As the spirit in man looks back upon itself, it induces that conscience with its accompanying sense of shortcoming which is the first step in the filiation of the sons of God.

The time cannot be allowed me for a further description of the redemptive process. That process may be studied by noting what steps are significant in the voluntary return of the spiritual man to his Source in the infinite Love, and interpreting them as the movement of a divine Spirit. There is repentance, or the acceptance of our spiritual kinship to God as our true life. There is faith, or the realization of, and committal to, infinite Love as the real ground of all things. There is regeneration, or the ushering forth of the psychical unit on its new life as an altruistic element in a higher form of being. There is worship, or the leaping up of the spirit to meet its Father and Lord. In all the steps of the progressive spiritual life there is a conscious nearing of the personality to an identity with the will and love of God, from that point where the self-reproaches of conscience established a sense of antagonism and condemnation to that pitch of personality where God becomes incarnate, and the Word made

flesh says, "I and my Father are one." One being alone ever made objective this divine-human life in its full meaning on the earth. He, our Lord Jesus Christ, was fully conscious of his divine origin, and of the rightful destiny of all personality to become one in purpose with the infinite Will. It was the inspiration derived from his insight which laid down the principle that no man ascendeth into heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. He, by objectifying the divine love, has become an atoning object of all saving faith; and by his resurrection he widens his personality from a living soul to a pervasive life-giving spirit whose movement is the salvation of the world.